Revision of Minimum Wages

1463. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has been constantly revising the minimum wages under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 to keep pace with the gelloping inflation and rising prices; and

(b) whether Government would endeavour to give parity in wages for mine workers with those of agricultural sector?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI P.A. SANGMA): (a) and (b) Under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 the Central Government is the appropriate Government for the fixation/revision of minimum rates of wages in 40 scheduled employments. The wages for the scheduled employment in Agriculture were last revised on 12.8.92, while the wages in the remaining 39 scheduled employments relating mainly to Construction, Mining and Railway sectors were revised last on 12.7.94. A variable component linked to Consumer Price Index Number, known as Variable Dearness Allowance has also been provided as part of the Minimum wages in all the 40 scheduled employment in the central sphere. The Variable Dearness Allownace for the scheduled employment in Agriculture has been linked to the Consumer Price Index Numbers for Agricultural labourers, while the Variable Dearness Allowance in the remaining 39 scheduled employments has been linked to the Consumer Price Index Number for Industrial Workers.

Wasteful Expenditure in Super Bazar

1464. SHRI GOPALSINH G. SOLANKI: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received reports regarding wastage of funds made available to Super Bazar;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether some lapses on the working of Super Bazar have also been reported; and

(d) if so, details thereof and steps proposed to be taken to check the wastage of funds?

MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) to (d) No specific reports about wastage of funds made available to Super Bazar have been received by the Government. Question/clarifications regarding various aspects of functioning of the Super Bazar are sought by Members of Parliament and others from the Government. These are communicated to the Super Bazar. The performance of Super Bazar is reviewed periodically by the Government.

Working of Consumer Courts

1465. PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the setting up of the Consumer Courts have hardly ensured the quality of goods produced or to safeguard the interests of the consumers as the courts instead of following the procedure of a simple adjudication based on the principles of natural justice ask the consumers to produce unnecessary affidavits and give weightage to technicalities;

(b) if so, whether Government have taken cognizance of the frequent reports appearing in this behalf in the print media and if so, what action has been taken to remedy the situation;

(c) the number of cases pending in the Consumer Courts in Delhi and since when and what is the date of oldest case pending; and

(d) how Government propose to take expeditious action in the disposal of the cases?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) and (b) The Consumer Courts set up under the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 are serving the purpose for which they are wet up under the Act. They are functioning as per procedure laid down in the Act and the Rules framed thereunder.

(c) and (d) According to the information sent by Govt. of NCT of Delhi, 11410 cases were pending in consumer courts in Delhi as on 31-7-95. The oldest case is pending from 1990 in Delhi State Commission. The State Government is making all efforts for establishing two more District Fora for the speedy disposal of the cases.

Central Assistance for Clearing Arrears of Consumer Courts

1466. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government had provided central assistance amounting to Rs. 61 crores for improving the image of the department in clearing the arrears in Consumer Courts;

(b) if so, the break-up of the expenditure incurred from the central aid; and

(c) how far the grant has eased the position of consumer courts in disposing of cases?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) The Central Government has agreed to provide a financial assistance of Rs. 61 crores in four half yearly instalments to the State Governments/UT Administrations to strengthen the infrastructure of the consumer courts set up under the Consumer Protection Act, 1986.

(b) and (c) The Government has sanctioned Rs. 5 crores on 27-7-95 as a part of the first instalment to the States/UTs. It is too early to assess its impact on the disposal of cases by consumer courts.

Procurement of Foodgrains by FCI

1467. SHRI O.P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 104 given in the Rajya Sabha on 31st July, 1995 and state:

(a) the quantity of wheat and rice procured by the Food Corporation of India in the country so far and the total storage capacity available in the warehouses therefor;

(b) whether the available storage capacity is not adequate to preserve all the procured wheat and rice; and

(c) if so, the steps taken by Government to ensure that the procured wheat and rice do not suffer damage as a result of their lying in the open in an unscientific manner?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD (SHRI AJIT SINGH): (a) and (b) the quantity of wheat and rice procured by the Food Corporation of India in the country for central pool during current Rabi 1995-96 and Kharif 1994-95 and the total storage capacity available with FCI as on 1-7-1995 are as under:

(in the tonnes)

I. Quantity Procured	
(i) Wheat (Rabi 1995-96)	122.83
(ii) Paddy (Kharif 1994-95)	81.62
(iii) Levy Rice (Kharif 1994-95)	77.81
TOTAL:	282.26
II. Total storage capacity (as on 1-7-1995)	
(i) Covered	231.10
(ii) Covered and Plinth (CAP)	56.93
TOTAL:	288.03